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A Call to Self-Denial

During

Passion Week

FOR CHRIST'S WORK AROUND THE WORLD

WE summon you all to a period of self-denial extending from April 13th to April 23rd, 1916, wherein by giving up all luxuries and needless pleasures we shall save for God's special work as represented by Foreign Missions a larger share of the gold and silver which are His by primal and ceaseless right. We call you to this period of self-denial not merely that we may increase the Lord's treasury, but the more that we may all have outward reminders that make for thoughtful devotion and earnest prayer, and that we may share somewhat the sorrows and privations of our stricken brethren in other lands.

THE GENERAL COMMITTEE OF THE
BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS
MEETING IN LOS ANGELES
NOVEMBER 6-9, 1915

For the American Church to Fail Her Lord is Unthinkable

Three compelling reasons urged the General Committee on Foreign Missions to call the Church to Passion Week Self-Denial, April 13 - 23, 1916.

I

THE deplorable situation we confront in a world where horror follows horror, and carnage and waste of human resources are so wide and so continuous that we are in danger of losing all keenness of sensibility and moral recoil, and, even worse, of so blunting compassion that we fail to be moved to the utmost endeavor to heal the hurt of a stricken world.

II

THE serious crippling of all European Missions leaves it largely to America, with her unimpaired strength, resources and prosperity, to carry on the evangelization of the non-Christian world. For the American Church at such a time as this to fail her Lord is unthinkable. We must with heroic self-denial enter into fellowship with Christ and our suffering brethren of Europe, and go to the relief of the depleted forces of our Lord in all the world.

III

GREAT movements in China, in Korea, in India, in Africa, in South America, and indeed, in all our world-fields, have for years been held back for lack of equipment. Oppressive debts, unbuilt hospitals and mission houses, ill equipped schools and printing plants, have everywhere retarded splendid forward-movements. In addition to the stress which for years has burdened the missionaries, crushing pressure is now being exerted by the evangelistic awakenings which are bringing tens of thousands of converts into the fold of the Church. In India, for illustration, we have the heart-breaking spectacle of more than one hundred and fifty thousand people held back because the Church is not ready to receive them.

In this time of world anguish and opportunity, when our missionaries are undergoing extraordinary privation and sacrifice to meet the emergencies confronting them, the General Committee was confident that the Church would eagerly respond to the call to enter, through greater self-denial and sacrifice, into closer fellowship with our overburdened missionaries and thus interpret to the world in terms of deepened devotion the sacrificial life of our Lord.

S. EARL TAYLOR
W. F. OLDHAM
FRANK MASON NORTH

The New Financial Plan *and* Self-Denial

The Former Includes The Latter

THE purpose of the "New Financial Plan" is to systematize and spiritualize church finance and put under it an adequate educational foundation. Giving is recognized as an act of worship in which every member of the congregation should participate each Sabbath. Giving, if it is to be intelligent, must be directed by a mind informed by frequent illuminating statements regarding world conditions.

The offering on a weekly basis is essential to the spiritual culture of the individual, meeting the need for a frequent recognition of God's ownership and man's stewardship, that the soul may be kept cleansed of covetousness. It supplies the only method by which a large majority of the people can make an adequate offering for the maintenance of the Church and its world-wide work.

THE plan as originally projected and finally adopted by the General Conference and expressed in the Discipline (*Par. 70, pages 58, 59*) and in the literature of the Commission on Finance, (*Manual, page 14*) recognizes that all cannot fully meet their obligations to the Church through the Weekly Offering and advocates additional opportunities for the expression of the benevolent impulse through special thank offerings.

While the New Financial Plan was adopted to protect the Church from outside

non-official, irresponsible appeals, it was at the same time accepted as a means of educating the Church to meet emergencies demanding Church-wide and prompt co-operation. The San Francisco disaster is still fresh in memory. Swift and generous action was required, and any system preventing such response would have been a positive and serious injury to the Church.

It is equally true that in the midst of great Mass Movements throughout the world, simultaneously with the wreckage wrought by a colossal war, no standard of giving attained by the Church has adequately provided for the minimum needs of its missionary work.

PRESENT conditions demand supplementary contributions, and impose upon the followers of Christ the obligation of Self-Denial. *First*:- an emergent need for which no provision can otherwise be made. *Second:*- an unparalleled material prosperity full of peril to the Church.

The greatest revival movement of modern times is penetrating to the remotest corners of the earth. It is not a provincial, but a world task that faces us. This is primarily an American responsibility. The pride of Europe's manhood lies bleeding on battle fields. The homes of millions have been darkened with sorrow. Multitudes are homeless and destitute. The suffering, bankrupt nations of Europe will be relatively helpless for years to come. America must be the world's Good Samaritan. The call is to the service of sacrifice.

America has been given unparalleled prosperity. The earth has yielded bountiful increase. Cattle and crops alone reach the staggering sum of *Ten Billion Dollars*. What shall be said to the soul of the nation

in the midst of this material increase?

THE Methodist Episcopal Church is confronted with a high privilege. The Protestant Episcopal Church, last year faced an emergency requiring $400,000 above its regular income. The appeal was made for one day's income, or its equivalent in self-denial. The Church reports:- "We have never met such enthusiasm in any appeal as this one evoked. We have yet to hear of a Parish that does not feel thankful for it." The Church responded with an offering of $431,000.

On December 21st, 1915, thousands of Jews of New York City assembled in Carnegie Hall to provide means of relief for distressed Hebrews in Europe. In the one evening nearly a *Million Dollars* was contributed. Money, checks, pledges and jewelry were piled about the feet of the speaker on the platform. The American Jewish Relief Committee is undertaking to raise $5,000,000 for the aid of their race in war-stricken Europe.

OURS is a greater family, and ours is a greater obligation. A week of self-denial, chivalrously observed, would bring great blessing. The Church would share in meeting the most extraordinary situation that has ever confronted the world. Such denial would improve the Church's ability to meet its regular budgets by touching the deeper springs of benevolence.

The possible revelation of a simpler, less expensive and more wholesome mode of living would show that all the enterprises of the Church might be easily financed while at the same time the individual Christian would enter into closer fellowship with Christ in sacrifice and service.